

International Journal on Responsibility 2.1 Dec 2018

Music, Institutions, and Responsibilities in Kosovo

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to present the current situation of music and art in Kosovo by highlighting relevant cultural related institutions which include music within and as a part of art.

This paper portrays the real situation of the art of music in Kosovo, and how institutions deal with the management and administration of the art of Music. In contrast to the current situation, the art of music could be administered bearing in mind the fact that by its very nature, music is something that exists objectively, that lies in everyone's feelings and it is as ancient as human history.

The art of music upholds the soul, our feelings, and the mind of every living entity. Based on this fact, this art cannot become only an object for management and administration, because one has to perform it from within, and as a mean of expression, it is enjoyed through perception of the performer's fortitude. About the goals of institutions of the art of music: to make this art controllable and discussible is not as important as through the strategies, projects, and engagement of certain people within institutions, to give a push forward so that music becomes more beneficial to us as individuals and society. Also, of a great importance is the connection and cooperation among many other necessary segments in this process. Suggestions and cooperation should become more apparent and stronger due to joint interest and purpose.

Music as an art should have its pace assisted through strategies and institutional policies, and conditions should be created as well as standards to give music its deserved status in society. Music should be present in every step of the way of every person's life, and its existence should be appropriately treated, and as such it would have great impact in the education, social and artistic, human and civilization aspect.

Key words: *Music, Institutions, Administration, Devaluation, Return to values*

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1. Introduction

Given the fact that every day we face different problems of Music as an art and a profession, and often the cause of these problems is considered the negligence or lack of work of relevant institutions or even a dozen of other factors to move forward and promote real artistic values, we shall take a look at these issues, as well as to do a more detailed analysis of this issue and try to find and give explanations by finding, from the beginning, the initiation of the problem, the path, its evolution in the society and in what we call the institutions, their function, structuring, what and why they are more than necessary, etc.

At the first glance, generally taken from the opinion of certain people, we have the impression of a disliked and inert state, in particular of the administration and promotion of what we are calling a genuine art.

This issue that we will try to elaborate further in this research, is not quite simple when we always have to take into account the fact that from the outside things are seen and perceived with a different look and point of view but on the other hand (from the inside), things are not that simple. There are a number of other issues which some may consider not of any importance nor worth discussing, but if we want meaningful art to find its deserved place in society, it is necessary for all these issues to be discussed and resolved.

This research will elaborate “what is music”, and explain the terms: society, institution, politics, and cultural politician. The content of this research will be presented leading to a key point where it becomes an even more effective explanation of general interest: understanding how the best connection and functionalization of society is made, the society of artists, creating interactive society-institutions relations, etc., with the aim of a better organization and a qualitatively better artistic life.

From in-depth analysis, the focus of this research is to raise the issue of raising awareness of the arts in general and music in particular, and of the social status of the artist or musician, and of the function of relevant institutions towards building an artistic society or a better society in the broadest sense, and of the role of institutional policies for the most dignified promotion of all arts as values of common interest.

After much hesitation about this research, being driven by the belief that all of us as an artistic society should do more, and that the greatest burden goes to artists to sensitize the public to the steps of entrepreneurship in the artistic field, I believe that elaboration of such topic must include many elements and many segments of art in general and music in particular, beginning with: how and what is music, what is our approach as society towards it, and what are different views of music. The most essential goals include the preservation and cultivation of the art of music as a value of national and social interest, the promotion of such values in the society, the worthy representation of this art to different nations and also different arts and cultures, the fair channeling of this art, the establishment of sound foundations of institutions that deal with and aim for the highest levels of

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achievement and offer this quality to a wider public, the promotion of cooperation and integration into European or wider international artistic structures, the role of these institutions for decision-making on public policy issues, and the interactions and relationships among society, artist, politics, and politicians.

2. What is Music?

Music is the mediator between spiritual life and physical life
--L. von Beethoven

It is difficult to find a somewhat definite and complete definition of music. So first of all, let us begin with this simple and a very common question.

That music is undefinable is opined not only by people from broader society, but also by many great artists and philosophers whose works, leaving deep traces in the arts and philosophy, have had impact as written documents and historical artifacts of development and civilization. One might attempt a definition of music as an art described in many professional texts and speeches, and mentioned in many books. Alternatively, one could better define music as a direct art, indeed the most direct art, and at the same time the most magical art for listeners, whom it influences by humanizing and transforming their consciousness.

Listening to music, after it has been selected and accepted by the brain, interacts with the whole being and becomes a relaxation inducing element and is often preferable to working environments. It is possible to verify scientifically its role and impact. Many health institutions in the world use music therapy as a healing method for their patients. But its special role is in the field of education, including the effects of self-restraint, sustainability, expansion of the horizon of knowledge, and raising intellectual level, not only of the person but of the society as a whole.

3. Music and society or vice versa

Fischer considered that when the artist reveals the new reality, he does not do this for himself, he does it for others, for all those who want to know in what world we live, where we come from and where we go (Fischer,2018).

Surely, there are personal initiatives on this issue, not lacking in society in general, but the right transfer and channeling of this issue cannot remain at the level of individual initiative.

The main promoters of this initiative should be relevant institutions with their development policies, and institutional leaders with their decision-making powers. Choosing strategies to achieve common goals, and the preservation, cultivation, and further development of music as an art, tradition and culture, should certainly be done by institutions and politicians within these institutions,

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which somehow show the way to society confirming the principles, values and interests that will have priority.

4. Institutions

The word institution means any association, any organization, organized within state rules, whether locally or nationally, for example schools, universities, institutes, the theater, etc. So, shortly said, institution means the official purview of different social, economic, educational, and cultural fields, and so on. These areas, with a view to operating efficiency, must necessarily have interlinking and interacting relationships with each other, given the common inter-institutional and social interest. The logical question would be: How will it look and how will this work in the field of art and what is the common interest in music?

If our society needs and values good professional musicians, it will not be able to have them immediately. To engender artists of an acceptable level will take time, effort, education, cost and investment, etc., i.e. support from many dimensions. This support should be promoted by the government with its institutions and may come as a result of cooperation between government institutions and educational institutions including pre-school, special and professional music schools, and universities. That is, the creation of an artist (musician) requires many years of institutional support for mastery courses, donations for activities, trips, concerts, competitions, etc., which necessarily requires the help of economic expertise and abundant funding within this cooperative endeavor.

The need and the interest of our society for generations of musicians (artists) of a desirable professional level is obvious. For this reason, the responsibility lies not only with educational institutions, but also with inter-institutional collaborators within certain educational, cultural, and, by all means, economic sectors.

The institutional education system has the responsibility of creating the conditions for generating artists (musicians) of the highest and most complete level. For such artists, who are already willing to contribute with their art, they should create favorable working conditions, where the artists can offer real value from their areas of expertise (instrumentalists, composers, conductors, theorists, actors, directors, sculptors, painters, etc.). Only then can they contribute directly to society, endowing it with a richer and valuable tradition, culture and civilization. Cohen said that when an institution comes into being, its vocabulary of exclusivity, its attempt to create a new reality and its claim (often made as strong in non-musical ones) to represent the essence of a people nation or culture tends to obscure the complex processes of musical negotiation underlying such claims (2009).

Education, or better said, the educational system and the network of institutions that support it, enriches society with professionals that offer culture.

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Hence it is necessary that cultural institutions pursue development policies for providing good conditions and work places for these artists, and not all of these artists should do similar work. Workplace planning and the placement of these artists in diverse appropriate roles in which they are proficient would contribute to keeping the flow of art at an acceptable level, and not all of these artists would end up operating in just a few segments of the profession. The art of music requires enough time and space for performance.

A certain group of artists such as essayists, musicologists, art critics, and the like, surely would be engaged in scientific work in the field of art, by contributing to a range of issues that other artists would not have the opportunity and the time to think about because their artistic scope does not match their profile as an artist.

Artists classified in this group would certainly contribute to raising awareness of the study of art, of analysis of various artistic creations, etc., by developing their activity in many institutions such as libraries, scientific institutes, or institutes for studies of artistic matters—which at the moment we do not have at all in Kosovo.

For instrumentalists, actors, or people educated for performance, their art can be developed within cultural institutions such as Philharmonic orchestras (city, youth, symphony), operas, choirs (city, women, mixed, of opera), theaters, chamber ensembles of various formations, etc. They could also act as independent performers or soloists.

A group of these professional artists sooner or later should be linked to the pedagogical side where their experiences can contribute to the educational system for the creation and training of cadres of a new generation of artists.

5. Devaluation of art as a value?!

Had we followed such a developmental process or respected such a hierarchical order, our society would not be facing the current major problems with art in general, especially with music. Such a process, with good development policies and strategies at institutions, would definitely raise art to a higher level in our society making it approximate or even equal to art in countries with the highest standards and achievement, in the most advanced European and world centers.

Therefore, what is this society, part of which we are, and why can this society not attain the level of other societies? Why this degeneration and this distaste of our society for such beautiful and precious art, when it comes to our own culture, history and tradition of which so much is written and spoken, when it is known that this very society gave us a humanist like St. Mother Theresa, a man of Albanian letters like Ismail Kadare, artists like Inva Mula and Ermonela Jaho, and kings like Agron and Teuta, brave as Skanderbeg? What happened to history and tradition, and what is happening today with art in this area of our society?

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Elsie said that the culture of the Albanian population is very interesting. On one hand, it was very prosperous for centuries, making of it a gold mine for anthropologists and ethnographers. On the other hand, today, unfortunately, it is extremely poor, continuously impoverished during the time of many regimes whether in Albania or even in Kosovo (Elsie, 2001). However, now is the last time that this culture (this also applies for the art of music) can be studied and preserved and cultivated before it escapes and disappears forever. For Albanians, difficulties and deprivations have always been part of life.

We hope that the long-suffering people of Kosovo and Albania will recover, and with their traditional energy and momentum overcome the indescribable difficulties of today. I do not know if there are any who think otherwise of Elsie for what he wrote, but that this is a bitter reality, there is not a doubt. Also, Kosovo's sociologist, Gani Bobi, in his book "Cultural Paradox" writes:

The social and cultural orientation of Albanians as a closure to and resistance of, as well as a revenge on invaders (revenge that, since it could not be realized, is embodied in themselves Albanians) is clearly seen in the popular forms and identities of their socio-cultural integration. These forms and units were "problematic" for the creation of the Albanian state between the two world wars. Although it was called an Albanian state, it was a stranger to their social and cultural orientation, unable to fulfill the many centuries of aspirations, unwilling to solve the existing problems and as such, unable to establish the socio-cultural integration of Albanians on its own " (Bobi, 1997 p. 19).

Among the key factors of the impoverishment and depreciation of our culture and of the art of music are undoubtedly the various wars and regimes we had historically over the centuries to the present day. And every war or regime brings behind many losses from every vital segment.

The goal of many wars was almost always breaking up our lands but also collapsing and assimilating us as a nation, by touching the most sensitive elements for a nation such as language, tradition, education and general culture including music.

Over the centuries we have shown that we as a nation know to preserve our high virtues and our tradition and culture. We are a nation that loves freedom with all its attributes but... every war and regime necessarily brings transformations and phenomena which we do not like even as a society. We are witnesses to these unpleasant phenomena, alluding in particular to the highly negative and harmful transformations from the last war and onwards.

By not having the opportunity to intervene in the first place, to cut them off, these negative changes come and become part of our daily life, leading to the degradation and fall of true values. The negative phenomena of the transition

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period continued and are still ongoing, confronting us in our institutions, in our everyday life and in every segment of life, both existential and cultural. This is so massive that now real values are at risk of being eliminated, to leave room for corruption, misuse, personal and party interests and favors. As individuals or small groups, as long as we do not have strong institutions in the sense of lying on a good economic base, capable of radical turns, we gradually become obsessed with these extremely harmful social phenomena without the possibility of reaction.

Corruption and ineffectiveness have entered into almost every segment of life and these are becoming the greatest dangers for us. Comparitively, the consequences of these phenomena are perhaps even greater than those of the war itself. Corruption scandals, abuse, etc., today fill the press and other media centers, radio, TV, websites, etc., which in some way are either politicized or monopolized. In the art of music, we are increasingly witnessing corrupt dealing. Recording invaluable songs without any criterion by studios and recording houses, dubious in their work, uncontrolled by anyone who does not consider anything other than material benefit, also leads to abuses and the total degradation of music. So material interest and the struggle to survive economically, in these chaotic circumstances, have made right and good work lose its meaning.

A quote from the economic expert Muhamet Sadiku (in *Transition and Institutional Reforms in Kosovo*) relates to the issue of corruption, saying: "The legislative executive failure of channels to address corruption is caused by institutional factors as well as lack of information or research to identify sources of corruption practices. This situation makes it difficult to build a strategy and prevents the program to combat corruption at the national level or to integrate this effort with regional and international programs" (Sadiku, 2009 p.10).

An intellectual who once secured his income and existence from work and his professional contribution, today finds his existence fluctuating like never before. Also, a genuine music player can hardly create personal income for his own well-being.

Imagine the instrumentalist, the composer, the conductor, the actor etc., working through a several-month preparation for a show or a concert, putting out physically and emotionally, and finding that after the final performance of the work there is no other benefit other than a minimal wage (not saying offensive) and paltry applause or felicitation.

6. Return towards values

Normally, if this situation does not change and cultural institutions via their art development policies do not put pressure on higher state instances, there will hardly be cultural level development whatsoever we want. It is hard for these artists and musicians to lead us and our society, knowing how institutions are not open to policies, strategies and a long-standing vision for art management. They

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will hardly stand morally unwavering for the interest of genuine art and music, while being threatened with poverty. It is difficult when for the exposition of their fine artistic work and public appearances, they face many challenges that make them feel disoriented at the very moment when only sublime feelings of the expression of their creative art should prevail, reproducing the culture, emancipation and art of a people.

Economic conditions and their unfavorable social status will render them likely to look for other ways of action such as playing music in the cafes, weddings and parties, organizing festivals and amateur concerts catering to the demands of different tastes. So, in today's conditions, it is very easy to devalue art and the artist as cultural values if institutional policies do not respond on time and do not support this category of society. Therefore, cooperation and coordination are seen as dual interests of the Institution-Society.

Guido Adler 1925 – has a saying “What art is better adapted to form an international connecting link than music? – especially instrumental music, which is in a manner an international language, an expression of the most intimate, the profoundest emotions of man “ (Shreffler, 2017., p.1). Art institutions including their politicians should show society the course (direction), confirming the principles and values behind these priorities. The policy of these institutions has to deal with ways of achieving common social and institutional goals and needs.

Creating better working conditions surely would yield positive results, and would be a good incentive for creators and artists. Let's just imagine the music and the good feeling of working in a brightly-lit environment with proper acoustics, with different paintings, mosaics and decors in the workplace, good quality instruments, cleanliness and ample space, programs presented in suitable venues such as halls, salons, and exhibition galleries, improvement of material conditions etc.

Building schools from preschool to university level with artistic level parameters and also a sound reformation of the educational system in art could be more fruitful if it included a considerable number of pedagogue artists contributing, as we mentioned above, in creating professional cadres of artists.

Theaters, orchestras such as the city, youth, symphonic etc., choirs, ensembles and various formations of chamber music, ballet troupes, etc., which are capital institutions (industries) for the culture of any society can sustain a number of great in-house artists and together with them create true art of high artistic value and worthy for presentation.

Folk ensembles such as Rugova, Shota etc., have gathered in their bosom several artists who through song and dance are still cultivating the good tradition in their performances, thus influencing even the best taste of the listener. Institutions should do more towards building at least one good concert hall in each region of the country or good performing arts venues (nowadays even our headquarter does not possess one), where activities would be developed of a better quality including the opportunity to invite artists from other countries and regions to introduce their art, to become acquainted with our culture and have the

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opportunity to share experiences and establish a good foundation of cooperation, recognition and respect in friendly relationships with different states and peoples.

There are a few established associations, such as the one of the pianists, Ars Kosova Foundation, stemming from initiatives by certain groups of genuine musicians, who are doing a great job in this aspect. Through their projects they discover and include new young talents through their contacts with new people in different artistic fields, etc., with the aim of preserving and cultivating the best of music.

Once in a while the artistic movement, built on the wishes of many art lovers, professional artists and a little institutional support (although insufficient) in cooperation with many other European centers, does a great job of affirming professional music not only by promoting artistic values both in the country and abroad, but also by creating opportunities for others to come from abroad and contribute by bringing diverse experiences. This mutual cooperation contributes to the recognition and the worthy representation of OUR art and artists.

To give some examples, the festivals Chopin Piano Fest, International Piano Competition organized by EPTA - "New Pianist", New International Music Festival "REMUSICA", DAM Festival, Korea Accapela International Festival, are evidence of the good professional work, strategy and vision of their leaders including Lejla Pula, Rafet Rudi, Dardan Noka, Rauf Dhomi, Vlora Baruti and others.

Institutional care for select ensembles, and these festivals, or even certain individuals and groups of professionals who are contributing to the fine values and the promotion of art as a social value to us, would only strengthen the position and status of (society-artist-institution) whereby, despite limited budgets and lack of funds (for now), and other topics that we will not deal with here, artists will be convinced that they shall find different forms of support. We must seek the most modern methods of administration for the executives of the arts institutions responsible for the institutional budget, and also the inevitable increase of that budget.

Undoubtedly, the cooperation of society with institutions and vice versa, whether through influential organizations, funding projects under certain rules, or simply formal contacts, would lead to a good opportunity for problematic issues to be addressed in depth by institutional policies, increasing the chances that final decisions are fair enough to avoid dissatisfaction and advance music and art as a value of social interest.

7. Concluding remarks:

This work recommends to us to some conclusions and goals to pursue.

- We have provided a realistic overview of the status of culture in the social and institutional spheres during a certain period of time, the postwar era from 2000-2018.

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- We have highlighted various cultural issues and the intervention of institutions in addressing and processing fairly such cultural issues, in particular the musical orientation of all genres.
- We do not intend to accuse or blame society or institutions.
- We have provided some clear ideas on how various institutions could be interconnected for coordination and collaboration to overcome many issues related to music.

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